



HURRICANE MITCH RECONSTRUCTION UPDATE

**USAID/Nicaragua
Hurricane Mitch
Reconstruction Program**

<i>(U.S. Millions of Dollars)</i>	<i>\$103.6</i>
<i>Public Health</i>	<i>30.6</i>
<i>Economic Reactivation</i>	<i>53.5</i>
<i>Disaster Mitigation</i>	<i>6.6</i>
<i>Education</i>	<i>4.5</i>
<i>Municipal Infrastructure</i>	<i>2.9</i>
<i>Transparency and Accountability</i>	<i>1.0</i>
<i>Food Aid</i>	<i>4.5</i>



Departments of Nicaragua Affected by Hurricane Mitch

USAID PROJECT HELPS COMBAT DESTRUCTIVE COCONUT DISEASE

A pilot project financed by USAID is helping Nicaragua prepare for the onslaught of a devastating disease that will affect the country's Atlantic coast coconut trees. The Lethal Yellowing Disease is steadily advancing along the Gulf and Caribbean coasts of Mexico, Belize and Honduras, killing hundreds of thousands of the Atlantic Tall variety of coconut trees that populate the region. Millions of coconut palms on the Caribbean and Atlantic coasts of other Central and South American countries are at risk, including Nicaragua.

Nicaragua has approximately 2,500 hectares of coconuts under cultivation nationwide, with



Maypan coconut seedlings, highly resistant to Lethal Yellowing Disease, arrive from Costa Rica.

over 85 percent in the Atlantic Coast region. While it cannot be predicted when the disease will reach Nicaragua, when it does, infected coconut palms die within three to six months of the first symptoms.

Coconuts provide a variety of uses to residents of the Atlantic coast region including cooking oil, water, coconut meat and fuel from the husks. The spread of the coconut disease would pose a threat to a basic diet component of more than 100,000 people from indigenous communities and ethnic groups that live in Nicaragua's Atlantic coast region. In addition, the spread of

(Continued on page 2)



Residents of the community of Wawa Bar in Nicaragua's Atlantic coast region planting disease-resistant Maypan coconut trees.

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(Continued from page 1)

the disease would affect tourism and the ecology of the Caribbean region.

USAID has allocated \$120,000 from its Agricultural Reconstruction Assistance Program to begin planting disease-resistant varieties of

coconut trees, the best-proven method for countering the affects of Lethal Yellowing Disease. Chemonics, a USAID contractor, is working with the Foundation for the Autonomy and Development of the Atlantic Coast (FADCANIC) to import plants and seeds of the Malaysian Dwarf/Panama Tall hybrid (MAYPAN) coconut variety from Costa Rica. The MAYPAN variety was bred to be highly resistant to the disease and to produce higher yields than the vulnerable Atlantic Tall coconut tree.

In addition, with a grant of \$55,000 from USAID's PL-480 food security program, Nicaragua's Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAG-FOR) is making further efforts in preparation against Lethal Yellowing Disease through training and establishing nurseries of disease-resistant coconut varieties. Another \$50,000 from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) was provided to the Interamerican Institute



Coconuts are a basic diet component for more than 100,000 people who live in Nicaragua's Atlantic coast region.

of Agricultural Cooperation (IICA) to purchase genetically improved trees and seeds.

The first 2,500 seedlings and 2,000 seeds, purchased by USDA/IICA, arrived on June 1, 2001 from Costa Rica. An additional

6,000 seeds arrived two weeks later. The plants and seeds are being distributed to 1,050 families in the communities of Bilwi, Tua, Krukira, Pahara, Wawa and Haulover in Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast region. Participants in the pilot project will also receive training in establishing and maintaining the cultivation of the hybrid Maypan coconut trees.

Planting has already begun in several Atlantic coast communities. Currently, over 10,000 disease-resistant coconut trees and seedlings have been planted.



1050 families will participate in the USAID project to help combat Lethal Yellowing Disease.

USAID has allocated \$120,000 from its Agricultural Reconstruction Assistance Program to begin planting disease-resistant varieties of coconut trees, the best-proven method for countering the affects of Lethal Yellowing Disease.



USAID Nicaragua

De la Rotonda

Centroamerica,

400 metros abajo

Managua, Nicaragua

Tel: (505) 267-0502

Fax: (505) 278-3828

<http://www.usaid.org.ni>